

NEWS

Volunteer Center of Bergen County

64 Passaic Street, Hackensack, NJ 07601

Phone: 201-489-9454 Fax: 201-489-1995 www.bergenvolunteers.org

Contact: Jane He, 201-489-9454, ext. 125 or jhe@bergenvolunteers.org

Cindy Andrade, ext. 123, candrade@bergenvolunteers.org

Faith Samples-Smart, ext. 115, fsamples-smart@bergenvolunteers.org

CAPTION: Children proudly display books they selected at the Volunteer Center's Big Book Giveaway.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 5, 2015

The Wonder of Books Brought to Children in Need

Hackensack - - On Saturday, April 25th, 40 children of the Volunteer Center of Bergen County's mentoring programs excitedly perused and selected books of their own from hundreds of donated books at a free book fair created exclusively for them -The Big Book Giveaway.

The Big Book Giveaway was implemented several years ago to address a need identified by the staff and volunteer mentors of Bergen Mentors, which is comprised of Mentoring Youth and Mentoring Moms, two programs of the Volunteer Center that provide mentors to children and families where the children are at-risk for social, emotional or behavioral challenges. A combined 182 Bergen County children are served by the two programs, 95% of whom are from low-income families. Buying books at a bookstore or at their school book fair is a luxury that is often not in the family budget for many of the children in Bergen Mentors, so this special book fair will enable the children to have books of their very own to keep and enjoy. Many of the families with children or mothers being mentored are struggling to provide the basics of shelter and food, and are faced with overwhelming personal challenges. By providing the children, who are ages 5-18, with age-appropriate, new, free books to select and take home as their very own, the Big Book Giveaway helps the children to develop a love of reading, and encourages parents and caregivers to spend time reading with and to their children.

"I was looking for Harry Potter books and I found them!", a 2nd grade girl said with a big grin. "I read them from the library but now I have one of my own." A 6th grade boy who had a bag bursting with books he had selected said, "There are a lot of good books here. I go to the library a lot but THESE are my own." A kindergartner was happy to find Goosebumps books. "My mom reads them to me but I can sound out the words."

Over 7,500 new children's books were collected for the Big Book Giveaway and other local literacy efforts through the Business Volunteer Council's **Books in a Bag** program. Books in a Bag is conducted annually by the Volunteer Center of Bergen County's *Business Volunteer Council (BVC)*, a program which engages companies in employee volunteering and workplace giving.

Books were generously donated by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, United Water, KPMG, Konica Minolta, Jacome America, Scholastic, BD and Books and Greetings bookstore. Books in a Bag was sponsored by Business Volunteer Council member companies Konica Minolta, United Water, BD and Rockland Electric. Funding for Bergen Mentors is also provided by TD Charitable Foundation, PNC Foundation, The Giants Foundation, OritaniBank Charitable Foundation and M&T Charitable Foundation.

For more information about Bergen Mentors or the Business Volunteer Council, or to learn how to volunteer as a mentor, contact the Volunteer Center at 201-489-9454 or visit www.bergenvolunteers.org.

The Volunteer Center of Bergen County strengthens the community by connecting people through service and developing civic leaders.

###